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Union in Christ

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UNION IN CHRIST

selected and arranged from the *Declaration and Address* of Thomas Campbell
by Lee Magness

This reading comprises selections from Thomas Campbell's influential Declaration and Address, whose two-hundredth anniversary is being commemorated in 2009. The selections have been arranged for liturgical reading, either in whole or section by section.

1 *Union in Christ*

You lovers of Jesus, and beloved of him,
 however scattered in this cloudy and dark day,
 you love the truth as it is in Jesus;
 so do we.

You desire union in Christ with all those who love him;
 so do we.

You lament and bewail our sad divisions;
 so do we.

You reject the doctrines and commandments of humans,
 that you may keep the law of Christ;
 so do we.

You believe the alone sufficiency of his word;
 so do we.

You believe that the word itself ought to be our rule,
 and not any human explication of it;
 so do we.

You believe that no one has a right to judge, to exclude,
 or reject his professing Christian brother,
 except as he stands condemned by the express letter of the law;
 so do we.

You believe that the great fundamental law of unity and love ought not to be
violated

 to make way for exalting human opinions to an equality with divine
revelation,

 by making them articles of faith and terms of communion;
 so do we.

2 *Union in Truth*

Union in truth has been, and ever must be, the desire and prayer of all;
"Union in Truth" is our motto.

 The Divine word is our standard;
 in the Lord's name we display our banners.

Our eyes are upon the promises,
 "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west,

and his glory from the rising of the sun.”
Our humble desire is to be his standard-bearers,
to fight under *his* banner, and with *his* weapons,
“which are not fleshly, but mighty through God
to the pulling down of strongholds;”
even all these strongholds of division, those partition walls of separation,
which, like the walls of Jericho, have been built up to the very
heavens,
to separate God’s people, to divide *his* flock.
An enemy has done this, but he shall not finally prevail;
“for the meek shall inherit the earth,
and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”
“And the kingdom and dominion,
even the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven,
shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High,
and they shall possess it forever.”

3 Union with Each Other in Christ

The first and foundation truth of our Christianity is union with Christ,
and the very next to it in order, union with each other in Christ—
“that we receive each other, as Christ has also received us,
to the glory of God.”
“For this is his commandment:
That we believe in his Son Jesus Christ,
and love one another, as he gave us commandment.
And the one who keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him;
but that we do love and receive our brother,
as we believe and hope Christ has received both him and us,
and yet refuse to hold communion with him, is, we confess, a mystery too deep for us.
If this be the way that Christ has received us, then woe be to us.

4 Union through Love

Let the Lord the healer descend upon his people.
May the Lord soon open the eyes of his people to see things in their true light,
and excite them to come up out of their wilderness condition,
out of this Babel of confusion,
leaning upon their Beloved,
and embracing each other in him,
holding fast the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.
This gracious unanimity in Jesus would afford the best evidence of their union with him,
and of their joint interest in the Father’s love.
“By this shall all people know that you are my disciples,
if you have love one to another.”
“This is my commandment,
That you love one another as I have loved you;
that you also love one another.”

5 *Union as the Desire of God and the Will of God's Church*

Should we speak of competency, viewing the greatness of this object,
 and the manifold difficulties which lie in the way of its accomplishment;
 we would readily exclaim, with the apostle,
 Who is sufficient for these things?
 But neither would *we* be discouraged;
 persuaded with him, that *our* sufficiency is of God.
 But, after all, both the mighty and the many are with us.
 The Lord himself, and all that are truly his people, are declaredly on our side.
 The prayers of all the Churches, nay, the prayers of Christ himself,
 and of all that have ascended to his heavenly kingdom, are with us.
 The blessing out of Zion is pronounced upon our undertaking.
 "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."
 With such encouragements as these,
 we judge it our bounden duty to make the attempt,
 by using all due means in our power to promote it.
 The cause that we advocate is not our own peculiar cause,
 nor the cause of any party, considered as such;
 it is a common cause, the cause of Christ and our brethren of all
 denominations.

6 *The Basis of Union*

You are all equally included as the objects of our love and esteem.
 With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity –
 Christ alone being the *head*, the center,
 his word the *rule*;
 an explicit belief of and clear conformity to it, in all things – *the terms*.
 More than this, you will not require of us;
 and less we cannot require of you.
 Taking the Divine word alone for our rule;
 the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth;
 and Christ alone, as exhibited in the word, for our salvation;
 may we be at peace among ourselves,
 follow peace with all people, and holiness,
 without which no one shall see the Lord.
 Peace be with all those that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.